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INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000150

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [TU](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY OFFERS TO HOST MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS
SUMMIT/TRILAT

REF: ANKARA 115

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR ROSS WILSON FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: TURKEY HAS OFFERED TO HOST A PROSPECTIVE

PAGE 02 RUEHAKA0150 C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000150
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN SUMMIT AND/OR TRILATERAL MEETING
INVOLVING SECRETARY RICE SHOULD SUCH A MEETING INVOLVING PM
OLMERT AND ABU MAZEN TAKE PLACE. CONTINUING PM ERDOGAN'S
ELECTION YEAR PRE-CAMPAIGN EFFORT TO RAISE TURKEY'S PROFILE
IN THE REGION, GOT OFFICIALS HAVE SEIZED UPON REPORTS OF A
POSSIBLE SUMMIT MEETING BETWEEN OLMERT AND ABBAS IN THE
AFTERMATH OF SECRETARY RICE'S RECENT VISIT TO THE REGION AND
EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SERVING AS A HOST. THE TURKS STATED
CLEARLY THAT THEY DO NOT SEEK INVOLVEMENT AS A MEDIATOR, BUT
RATHER WISH TO SERVE IN A FACILITATIVE CAPACITY. THERE IS
PRECEDENT FOR THE TURKS PLAYING SUCH A ROLE. TURKEY HELPED
TO BROKER AND EVENTUALLY HOSTED THE FIRST PUBLIC, OFFICIAL
TALKS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PAKISTAN IN SEPTEMBER 2005. THE GOT
HAS ALSO CONVEYED THIS OFFER TO ISRAELI OFFICIALS. END
SUMMARY

12. (C) TURKISH MFA DEPARTMENT HEAD FOR THE MIDDLE EAST SEDAT
ONAL CONVOKED POLOFF JANUARY 24 TO REQUEST HE CONVEY GOT
INTEREST IN HOSTING A POSSIBLE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN SUMMIT OR
TRILATERAL MEETING INVOLVING SECRETARY RICE. ONAL POINTED TO

PAGE 03 RUEHAKA0150 C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000150
REPORTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SECRETARY'S RECENT VISIT TO
THE REGION OF A POSSIBLE FOLLOW-ON DIPLOMATIC EFFORT
INVOLVING AN OLMERT-ABBAS MEETING TO BE HELD SOMETIME IN
FEBRUARY DURING THE SECRETARY'S NEXT PROSPECTIVE VISIT TO THE
REGION. ONAL STRESSED THAT TURKEY'S INTENT IS TO ACT IN A
FACILITATIVE ROLE AS A HOST OF SUCH A MEETING, BUT IS NOT
ANGLING FOR INVOLVEMENT IN MEDIATING DETAILS OF THE PEACE
PROCESS.

13. (C) POINTING TO PM ERDOGAN'S EFFORT IN RECENT MONTHS TO
RAISE TURKEY'S PROFILE IN ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH
A SERIES OF VISITS TO AMMAN, TEHRAN, DAMASCUS, AND BEIRUT,
ONAL NOTED TURKEY'S INTENT TO INCREASE THE PACE OF ITS
ENGAGEMENT WITH ISRAEL IN THE COMING WEEKS. FM GUL IS
PLANNING TO MEET FM LIVNI ON THE MARGINS OF THE WORLD
ECONOMIC FORUM IN DAVOS THIS WEEK, FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER
SECRETARIES WILL MEET IN ANKARA FEBRUARY 7, ISRAELI PRIME

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MINISTER OLMERT WILL BE IN ANKARA FOR A ONE-DAY VISIT
FEBRUARY 15, AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN TRADE AND
CUSTOMS TUZMEN WILL LEAD THE TURKISH DELEGATION TO A MEETING

PAGE 04 RUEHAKA0150 C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000150
OF THE TURKISH-ISRAELI JOINT ECONOMIC COOPERATION COMMITTEE
IN EARLY MARCH. TURKISH OFFICIALS HAVE RECENTLY INTIMATED PM
ERDOGAN INTENDS TO VISIT ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN
TERRITORIES SOMETIME AFTER OLMERT'S VISIT TO TURKEY. IN THAT
CONTEXT, ACCORDING TO ONAL, IT IS NATURAL THAT TURKEY WOULD
SEEK TO ASSIST IN FACILITATING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN TALKS, IN
CONJUNCTION WITH EFFORTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE
QUARTET. ERDOGAN HIMSELF HAD REFERRED TO TURKEY'S
WILLINGNESS TO HELP AS NEEDED DURING HIS JANUARY 18 MEETING
WITH U/S BURNS (REFTEL). ONAL ADDED THE GOT HAD CONVEYED
THIS OFFER TO ISRAELI OFFICIALS AS WELL.

14. (C) COMMENT: THE TURKISH OFFER TO PLAY A FACILITATING ROLE
IN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN TALKS HAS TWO MOTIVATING FACTORS. THE
AKP'S FOREIGN POLICY OUTLOOK HAS LONG BEEN FOCUSED ON THE
NEED TO COMPLEMENT TURKEY'S DECADES-LONG EFFORT TO WESTERNIZE
AND JOIN EUROPE WITH A SIMILAR FOCUS ON INCREASING TURKISH
ENGAGEMENT WITH ITS MIDDLE EAST NEIGHBORS. A PRINCIPAL GOAL
OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IS TO HELP ESTABLISH A GREATER
LEVEL OF STABILITY IN ITS REGION, TO INCLUDE FACILITATING

PAGE 05 RUEHAKA0150 C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000150
DIALOGUE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS, AS WELL AS WITH
OTHER REGIONAL ACTORS (WITNESS THE ROLE TURKEY PLAYED IN
BROKERING TALKS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PAKISTAN IN SEPTEMBER
2005). IN ADDITION TO THESE LONG-TERM FOREIGN POLICY GOALS,
PM ERDOGAN'S POTENTIAL PRESIDENTIAL BID THIS SPRING AND THE
AKP'S ELECTORAL PROSPECTS IN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS LATER
THIS YEAR CERTAINLY WOULDN'T BE HURT BY ERDOGAN ASSUMING A
HIGH PROFILE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE.

VISIT ANKARA'S CLASSIFIED WEB SITE AT
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WILSON